

### **Iowa Department of Human Services**

Terry E. Branstad Governor Kim Reynolds Lt. Governor Charles M. Palmer Director

December 27, 2011

Michael Marshall Secretary of the Senate State Capitol Building L O C A L Charlie Smithson Chief Clerk of the House State Capitol Building L O C A L

Dear Mr. Marshall and Mr. Smithson:

Enclosed please find the Independent Living Services Annual Report.

This report was prepared pursuant to Iowa Code Section 234.35(4).

This report is also available on the Department of Human Services website at <a href="http://www.dhs.iowa.gov/Partners/Reports/LegislativeReports/LegisReports.html">http://www.dhs.iowa.gov/Partners/Reports/LegislativeReports/LegisReports.html</a>.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Davis Harbison

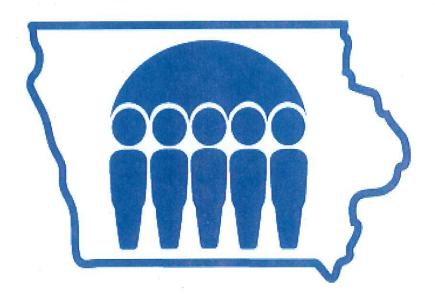
Policy Advisor

Enclosure

cc: Governor Terry E. Branstad
Senator Jack Hatch
Senator David Johnson
Representative David Heaton
Representative Lisa Heddens
Legislative Services Agency
Kris Bell, Senate Majority Staff
Josh Bronsink, Senate Minority Staff
Brad Trow, House Majority Staff
Zeke Furlong, House Minority Staff

y Cavis Harbison

# **Iowa Department of Human Services**



# Independent Living Services Annual report

December 2011

### **Executive Summary**

The Supervised Apartment Living (SAL) foster care program is the least restrictive type of foster care placement within the state. The program serves older youth in foster care who possess the maturity needed for living in the community with less supervision than that provided by a foster family or foster group setting. Services and supports are structured to prepare the youth for self-sufficiency.

There are two types of SAL living arrangements, scattered-site and cluster. Youth placed in a scattered-site setting live in an apartment unit within the community with services and supports centered on supervision and development of life skills to assist the youth in preparation for self-sufficiency; youth have access to SAL staff 24/7 (typically by phone) but live on their own. Cluster site settings are those in which four to six youth reside in apartments located in one building and are supervised by one agency, with staff on site at any time that more than one youth is present in the cluster setting. The total number of unduplicated youth for whom the state paid for SAL services during state fiscal year (SFY)'11 was 144.

During SFY '11, a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) was released for agencies to provide SAL services, including living arrangements. Seven agencies were awarded a contract effective 07/01/11.

The RFP changed several key components of the SAL program designed to improve the overall program, with the goal of ultimately improving the short-range and longrange outcomes of youth in a SAL foster care placement. Changes included

- Increasing the minimum age for placement into the program from 16 years of age to 16 ½ years of age for cluster site settings and 17 years of age for scattered site settings
- Greater emphasis is placed on school attendance and progress
- The new contracts are performance based, aligning with the Child and Family Service Review outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being
- The monthly maintenance stipend the youth or their payee receives is set at \$750.00 per month effective 07/01/11.

The Department believes the changes made to the contracts in the new procurement will continue to assist transitioning youth to remain in school though graduation, to increase self sufficiency skill building and youth connection to their communities, and will continue to increase provider capacity to meaningfully engage youth aging out of the foster care system in a manner beneficial to the youth and to the State.

## SFY 2011 Independent Living Services Annual Report

The Supervised Apartment Living (SAL) foster care program is the least restrictive type of foster care placement within the state. The program is set up for older youth in foster care with the maturity needed for living in the community with less supervision than that provided by a foster family or foster group setting, with services and supports aimed at preparing the youth for self-sufficiency.

During SFY '11, a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) was released for agencies to provide SAL services, including living arrangements. Prior to the RFP, there was an open panel for child welfare agencies to apply to become a SAL provider. The Department of Human Services (DHS) received a total of 9 proposals; after a thorough evaluation on several levels, 7 proposals were awarded a contract effective 07/01/11. The SAL contractors are: Florence Crittenton Home of Sioux City; Hillcrest Family Services: Lutheran Services of Iowa, Inc.; Quakerdale; Woodward Youth Corporation; Youth Homes of Mid-America; and Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. There are two types of SAL living arrangements, scattered-site and cluster. SAL services can be provided directly by the worker or contracted out; the vast majority of cases are contracted out. Youth placed in a scattered site setting live in an apartment unit within the community with services and supports centered on supervision and development of life skills to assist the youth in preparation for self-sufficiency; youth have access to SAL staff 24/7 (typically by phone) but live on their own. Cluster site settings are those in which four to six youth reside in apartments located in one building and are supervised by one agency, with staff on site at any time that more than one youth is present in the cluster setting.

The RFP changed several key components of the SAL program designed to improve the overall program, with the goal of ultimately improving the short-range and longrange outcomes of youth in a SAL foster care placement. The minimum age for placement into a SAL program has been raised from 16 years of age to 16 ½ years of age for cluster site settings and 17 years of age for scattered site settings. Increasing the minimum age is expected to increase the appropriateness/maturity of youth placed in SAL in addition to allowing a youth to live in a cluster site setting with basically 24/7 staffing prior to moving to a scattered site setting, in which the youth live on their own in an apartment unit. The RFP also required programs to place great emphasis on education, removing the old requirement that youth in SAL both attend school and work part-time. Youth are expected to be attending school to obtain their high school diploma (or only where deemed more appropriate, their GED) and are not required to work parttime, unless doing so would not comprise their education. If youth are under 18 years of age and no longer attending high school, they may attend post-secondary school or instead choose to work, at least an average of 80 hours per month. Another big change for the SAL program is the monthly maintenance stipend the youth receive (much like the maintenance a foster family receives for a foster child in their care, however in SAL, the maintenance stipend goes directly to the youth or a payee such as the SAL agency caseworker (for purposes of teaching money management skills and budgeting) went

up from \$573.90 per month to \$750.00 per month effective 07/01/11. The previous amount was well below poverty guidelines and contributed to youth renting in rundown neighborhoods that were often infested with drug activity in addition to forcing youth to drop out of school and work whatever jobs they could get to pay bills, such as rent, utilities, food, clothing, and transportation. The increase in the minimum age of youth placed in SAL (fewer youth eligible for SAL) factored into an increase in the budget necessary for increasing the maintenance stipend.

Prior to 07/01/11, there were only 2 providers in the state that had an active SAL cluster program. Since then, 4 out of the 7 SAL contractors offer cluster site settings; additionally, all 7 of the contractors are active providers, whereas in the past, even though there were 13 child welfare agencies that had a SAL contract with DHS, only 3 to 4 were actively serving youth. The number of agencies offering cluster settings has increased due to DHS now paying agencies to staff (basically 24/7) cluster settings. Services for youth in SAL are authorized by the referring worker (DHS or JCS) and by number of units of service per month, with a unit being one billable hour. There are several service unit codes (e.g., individually versus group delivered services, scattered site services versus cluster site services) with each contractor having their own costs established for each type of service. SAL foster care is 100% state funded (both maintenance and service payments).

Effective 07/01/11 (SFY 2012), SAL contracts are outcome based, lining up with the Child and Family Service Review outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being, with the following outcomes: 1) Safety Outcome Performance Measure - There will be no founded cases of abuse or neglect of the youth in the SAL contractor's care by the contractor or subcontractor or by other youth in the contractor's SAL foster care program; 2) Permanency Outcome 1 Performance Measure - The contractor will ensure that permanent connections are maintained or secured through active connections with the youth's family members and/or other persons important in the youth's life, with 60% of youth served during year one (of the contract) maintaining at least twice a month contact with the youth's positive support system and likewise 70% of youth served during year two (of the contract); 3) Permanency Outcome 2 Performance Measure -The contractor will ensure youth engagement within the community, with 60% of youth served during year one (of the contract) regularly participating (at least weekly) in organized community activity (including extra-curricular school activities, faith based activities, community clubs, volunteer work) and likewise 70% of youth served during year two (of the contract); 4) Well-Being Outcome Performance Measure - Increased educational achievement for youth, with 70% of youth served during year one (of the contract) complying with satisfactory school attendance leading to a high school diploma or GED and likewise 75% of youth served during year two (of the contract). SFY 2012 performance measures will be included in next year's (SFY 2012) report.

DHS staff meets with SAL contractors on a quarterly basis, with the primary goal of continual improvement of the program; discussion centers on what's working and what needs attention along with contractors networking with each other on specific youth issues that arise and how handled. The quarterly meetings are proving to be very

effective in quick problem solving and contractors learning from one another. After the most recent quarterly meeting, training was conducted, via a conference call, to any SAL staff (while seated at their computers) on how best to utilize a particular online life skills training program, per request of the contractors.

The total number of unduplicated youth for whom the state paid for SAL services during state fiscal year (SFY)'11 was 144; down from 189 for SFY '10. Attached is a spreadsheet detailing the number of youth served: by county; under the responsibility of either the Department or Juvenile Court Services; by legal status; discharged from such services and the reasons for discharge (see attached SAL Summary FY'2011). The decrease for the past SFY can be primarily attributed to: only two to three SAL contractors (prior to 07/01/11) actively receiving referrals of youth for their SAL program; fewer caseworkers referring youth to a SAL placement, due to the lack of such placements and the lack of cluster site settings needed for youth prior to being in their own apartment in a scattered site setting; and the number of youth who have been unsuccessfully discharged from the program in the past due to several reasons, of which the RFP, new SAL policies, and contracts effective 07/01/11 are attempting to eradicate (e.g., increased minimum age, specific outcomes for youth, increased emphasis on education, and increased monthly stipend to meet the youth's costs of living).

Clearly the largest percent of youth receiving SAL services, 35% were from Polk County, and Woodbury County (10%) coming in next, amounting to two out of lowa's ninety-nine counties representing 45% of all youth served in the program, with no youth represented from 58 counties (as opposed to 50 counties for SFY '10). This over and under representation for this particular foster care placement is not surprising when compared to overall representation of youth in foster care by county. Out of the 13 child placing agencies that the Department contracted with during SFY '11 to provide SAL services, the majority provided services in lowa's more urban areas, primarily due to availability of apartment units and landlords willing to rent to youth under the age of eighteen. Moreover, only a handful of the 13 providers DHS contracted with during SFY '11 had active SAL programs, with over half of providers only occasionally serving youth in this type of placement. The over represented counties are those counties in which there were stronger SAL programs.

For SFY'11, there were approximately 4% of youth in the SAL program on a voluntary basis (placement status for youth 18 through 19 years of age still working on their high school education). In order for youth to continue to be served past their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, the youth must agree to stay in care in addition to completing their high school education. Additionally, funding must be available for the services. While funding is always an issue, it is not uncommon for youth who could remain in foster care past 18 years of age to choose not to. The SAL foster care program is lowa's only foster care program that allows for a youth who has left foster care at age 18 (regardless of level of placement, i.e., family foster care, group care, SAL) to voluntarily return to a SAL foster care placement prior to their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to complete their high school education or obtain a general equivalency diploma without going through an exception

to policy request; this is an important option for those youth who could elect to stay past their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to complete their education but choose not to, oftentimes wanting to be "free" from "the system" and believing they can do better on their own, only to find out otherwise several months down the road. There were 109 youth discharged from this particular program during SFY '11. Of those discharged, 74% "aged out" of care (left care because they have attained 18 years of age or older), with another 6% being discharged to return home, 9% had a change in placement or level of care (typically to a more restrictive placement due to behavior issues, often due to substance abuse and/or mental illness), and 4% ran away from placement (see attached Exit Reason chart).

Not surprisingly, African American youth were over-represented in this particular foster care placement, as is the case in all foster care placement types, comprising 18% of youth placed; white youth comprised 71% placed (see attached SAL by Race chart).

#### **Evaluation of SAL Services**

Eligibility for SAL placement is based, among other things, on a comprehensive assessment of the youth that reviews available information on the youth, especially as it pertains to the youth's ability to live independently, participate in services and activities to achieve self-sufficiency, and in following the provisions of their case plan (see attached "Pre-placement Screening for Supervised Apartment Living Foster Care" form, which must be completed by the caseworker prior to placing a youth in SAL). Additionally, a transition plan must be completed and updated at each case review for youth in foster care who are 16 years of age and older; the plan reviews strengths and needs of youth particularly around life skills along with the possible need for disability services as an adult, significant information needed for appropriate placement into the SAL program. Caseworkers contract with SAL providers for a certain number of units of service per month, with current minimum requirements of weekly face-to-face provider contacts with youth under 18 years of age and biweekly (once every two weeks) faceto-face contacts with youth over age 18. DHS staff can always contract for more units than the minimum requirement (and usually do) depending on the needs of the specific youth and budget constraints. Caseworkers need to be specific with providers on use of units and expected outcomes to best meet the needs and goals of the youth. Contracted staff are expected to provide guidance, oversight, behavior monitoring and services and supports for development of life skills to prepare them as much as possible for self-sufficiency.

Research indicates that adolescents in foster care are very often behind their peers in life skills, including employment skills, attendance/performance at school, money management, and skills leading to a healthy lifestyle and relationships. This lack of preparation is no less for those youth placed into SAL. Additionally, youth in this placement have often lacked a positive support system even more so than other youth in care, experience loneliness, and are apt to be prey for others to take advantage of (e.g., moving in with them, couch surfing in their apartments, illegal behaviors). At

times, there has been a push in the past to put a youth in SAL that is ill prepared to be in such an unrestrictive placement setting and for which another type of foster care setting may be more appropriate but is not viable. This is due to the lack of foster families willing to take teen-agers, high-cost of group care, youth not needing a treatment setting (but still requiring more structure than living in their own apartment), and sometimes due to the fact that this is the last placement option for a youth (that is, they cannot function or be placed in a family setting due to behaviors/mental health issues) and they have "burned their bridges" with group care placements. Youth released from the state training schools have even been placed directly into the SAL program; which is going from a very structured setting to the least structured setting in lowa's foster care placement types. It has not been uncommon for youth to get evicted from their apartment, run into money management issues (even with the provider often being the payee for the monthly maintenance checks), not attend school or fail to keep the working requirements.

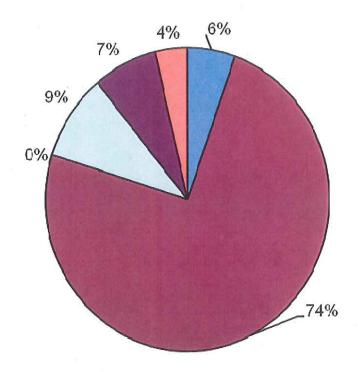
It is expected that with the SFY '12 "new" contracting process, including contracted deliverables and outcomes, that the scenario painted above will much less the case and that the SAL foster care program will continue to be strengthened with youth exiting more self-sufficient and better prepared for young adulthood. DHS staff held meetings and conference calls with SAL providers during calendar years 2009 and 2010 prior to writing the RFP. Most notable from those meetings and calls, in addition to youth input, was that a one size fits all in this type of setting does not work; providers were strong in their beliefs that many youth needed the option to live in a cluster type SAL setting, with other peers and 24 hour staffing prior to being moved to their own apartment with minimal staffing and that the maintenance payment youth received needed to be more than what a foster family receives for a teen, due to economies of scale. The RFP and likewise the finalized SAL policy and contracts addressed these and other issues as noted above to make this a program in which youth can thrive and exit the foster care system with the necessary skills and tools to successfully transition to healthy and productive young adults.

								0	_	0	0	N		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		_	_	_	\tag{\tag{\tag{\tag{\tag{\tag{\tag{	0	-
	Total			-		0			•	)	)	. ,	)		)	)	)	)	)	)	)					7	)	
	Runaway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exit Reason	Change in Level of Care		0	0		0	0		0		0			0								0	0	0	0	0		0
Exit	Change in Placement		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	_	0	0	0
	łuO bagA	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	<u> </u>	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	-	0	4	0	1
	Return Home	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IsjoT	0	0	2	0	0	1	9	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	8	-	4	0	_
Legal Status	Custody Transferred	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legal Status	ЯЧТ	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	l	0	0	0	0
	Delinquent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	To the second	0	0	0	2	0	0
	ANIO	0	0	2	0	0	1	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	1	2	0	1
	Voluntary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
ment	rce	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	2	0	0
Placemen	DHS	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	2	0	1
	JAS ni gninism9A 1 103/06/9 to as		0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1 1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	_	0	2	0	0	0	0
	Total Served FY2011	0	0	2	0	0	1	9	2			2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-		3		4	0	
	County Number	1	2	3	4	5	9	7	8	6	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	County	Adair	Adams	Allamakee	Appanoose	Audubon	Benton	Black Hawk	Boone	Bremer	Buchanan	Buena Vista	Butler	Calhoun	Carroll	Cass	Cedar	Cerro Gordo	Cherokee	Chickasaw	Clarke	Clay	Clayton	Clinton	Crawford	Dallas	Davis	Decatur

Г		0	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	~	0	0	~	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	~	~	0	0	0
	IstoT								4.																				
	Runaway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exit Reason	Change in Level of Care	0	1		0	8					0			0				0							1				0
EXIT	Change in Placement		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	JuO bagA	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	O
	Return Home	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	C
	Total	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	7	0	0	0	_	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	C
S	Custody Transferred	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legal Status	ЯЧТ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Led	Delinquent	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	CINA	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Voluntary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
nent	nce	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Placemen	эна	0	~	0	2	0	F and a second	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	I	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	9	0	0	0
_	JAS ni gninismaЯ f f0S/06/9 to as		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	_	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Total Served	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	3	0	0	0
	Соипѓу Митрег	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	20	51	52	53	54	55
	County	elaware	es Moines	ickinson	appudue	nmet	yette	oyd	ranklin	emont	reene	rundy	uthrie	amilton	ancock	ardin	arrison	enry	oward	umboldt	a	wa	ckson	ısper	efferson	hnson	nes	eokuk	ossuth

Change in Placemer Change in Level of Care Care Total	-
0	Change in Level o Care Runaway
	)
0 2	
ω co	0 0
- 0	0
- 0	
7 0	C
0 0	
4	nce
	DHS
C	2 ni gninismeЯ 1 102/06/8 to 26
u	Total Served FY2011
χ Σ	County Number
torv	County

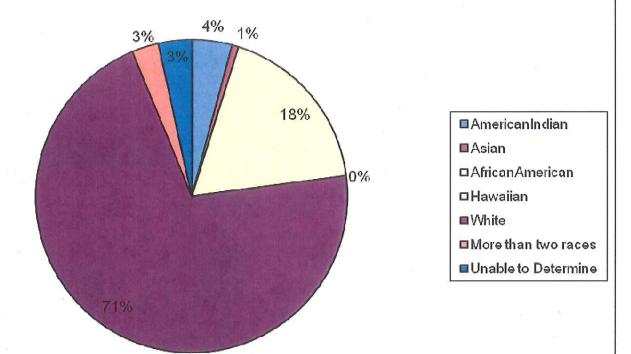
### Exit Reason



- ■Return Home ■Age Out □Death
- □Change in Placement
  ■Change in care Level
- ■Runaway

Exit Reas	son	
Return Home	6	6%
Age Out	81	74%
Death	0	0%
Change in Placement	10	9%
Change in care Level	8	7%
Runaway	4	4%
Total	109	100%

### Supervised Apartment Living By Race



Race	Counts	Percent
AmericanIndian	6	4%
Asian	1	1%
AfricanAmerican	26	18%
Hawaiian	0	0%
White	102	71%
More than two		F2-7-7141
races	4	3%
Unable to		
Determine	5	3%
Total	144	100%

#### PREPLACEMENT SCREENING FOR SUPERVISED APARTMENT LIVING FOSTER CARE

Date.		¥7	
Client Name	Date of Birth	FACS ID	County
Current Living Arrangement  Date Life Skill Assessment was completed:  (Attach a copy of the results to this assessment)	nt.)		Legal Status:  CINA Delinquent Voluntary
School and Work History			<b>建筑是"从民产"。</b> 14.
☐ Currently enrolled in school or GED			
Grade School		-	IEP?  Yes  No
Performing at appropriate level in so  Mild to moderate problems at school  Serious school difficulties including failing	l including underac		
☐ Not currently enrolled in school	8	¥2	9
Last School Attended		Last Grade Comp	oleted
☐ Currently employed ☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time		27 28 28	a a a
☐ Not currently employed			
Date Last Worked	a with fave to no ne	ahlama	
Has held a job for at least six month Has held a job for at least one month Serious difficulties finding or maint No work history No opportunity to work	h or has mild attend	ance or disciplinary pro	blems
Medical or Mental Health Issues (Inclu	ding Pregnancy)		<b>基本的基础</b>
Diagnosis:			(
Medications:		Is the youth able to ma	

Substance Abuse								
<ul> <li>No notable substance use difficulties currently or in recovery for at least one year</li> <li>Mild to moderate substance use problems that occasionally present problems of living or in recovery for less than one year</li> <li>Moderate to serious substance abuse problem that requires treatment and exacerbates current problems and conditions</li> </ul>								
Describe current substance abuse treatment:								
Parenting	The Month of the Control of the Cont							
Does the youth have any children?  Yes. If yes, how many?  No	Does the youth have custody of the children?  Yes  No							
Does the youth's child have any health concerns or special needs?  Yes. If yes, please describe:								
□ No								
Cooperation/Compliance at Current Placement  Generally compliant and cooperative Cocasionally noncompliant to some rules or adult instructions Frequently noncompliant to rules and adult instructions								
History of Delinquency								
Yes. If yes, describe:								
Date and degree of most recent charge:								
Currently on probation?  Yes. If yes, describe youth's compliance with term	s of probation:							
☐ No History of Violence Toward Self, Others, or Proj	☐ No History of Violence Toward Self, Others, or Property							
☐ Yes. If yes, describe: ☐ No	, w							
Current (within past three months) violent/aggressive be	chavior:							
Yes. If yes, describe:								
□ No								

470-4063 (7/04) Page 2.

List names of team members consulted in making the	recommendations for SAL placement:
Other comments:	
	1 1 00 1 1 00 1 A CAL
List the plan of services and resources available to add placement (i.e., positive connections, economic, commu	
Number of hours of supervision that will be authorized:	
Overall assessment of suitability for Supervised Apart	ment Living Foster Care:
Appropriate for SAL-scattered site	
Appropriate for SAL-cluster site	
☐ Not appropriate for SAL	
What is the plan if SAL placement is not approved or if S.	AL services are terminated:
e 8	
CV/ICO	Data
Case Manager/JCO	Date